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A MISSOURIAN IN THE FAR WEST

OR

The World as Seen by a Stranger

"It never pays
To fret and growl
When fortune seems our foe.
The better bred
Will push ahead
And strive the braver blow;
For luck is work
And those who shirk
Should not lament their doom.
But yield the play
And clear the way
That better men have room."

BY

JOEL STROTHER WILLIAMS

DEMOCRAT PRINTING COMPANY
CARROLLTON, MO.

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DEDICATION

I respectfully dedicate this book to Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, chief magistrate of the greater part of North America, commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy thereof and leader of the anti-race suicide order of his native land. I am led to this course because I believe Mr. Roosevelt is a nice man; because he draws a larger salary than any other civil officer in this country; and because I want him to pay me the same tribute of recognition when he again condescends to the insignificance of writing books and I rise to the prominence of occupying the chair of the President of the United States.

PREFACE

Were it not for the fact that books meet critical eyes and skeptical minds a preface to a work like this would not be necessary; but as long as the sun has shone upon the amateur's green field of energy no one has ventured to scatter an edition of a book broadcast through the land without laying down a few statements in the beginning to protect him from the wild conclusions of a doubting world. If an author wishes to be given due credit for that which he attempts, instead of undue credit for that which he does not attempt, he must insert his purpose to keep the wayward minds of his readers from going astray and to give all who may try to unravel any tangled bit of matter a fair chance to see things in his own original way.

Inasmuch as the material substance of this book was gathered by the author from his personal experience and is told in his own peculiar style, it is not to be expected that a discourse of such dry facts will interest the public as would a

work in which the brilliant imagination of a more accomplished writer is allowed to play upon the theme. Although the author has indulged freely in imaginary circumstances and fugitive assertions, he is painfully aware of his inability along with his lack of patience and persistence; but as he lays no claim to an ability to write a perfect book, he has no apologies to offer for his short-comings. If critics insist upon reasons for the incorrect and incomplete appearance of this little volume, they have but to turn to this page and read a frank confession of ignorance on the part of the author, and to consider the offending source accordingly.

In letting these leaves escape his hands the author realizes that he enters a dangerous field. He, and he alone, is responsible for a production that must survive flattery or succumb to cynical criticisms, yet there is but one regret sent out with this book. The world holds a profound respect for the book buyer, and, it might be added, an equally profound contempt for the book borrower; and it is feared that this book will be read by some one who has not paid for it. The book borrower possesses all the mean instincts of the potato bug, the cabbage flea and the other low forms of life in the pest kingdom, and in the battle of life makes about such a mark as a Roman candlestick would make in an encounter with a Krupp gun.

There are, however, some things that are irresistible to literary ambition. When a young optimist consults his own

conscience regarding the success of a prospective venture he is seldom dissuaded from his purpose. He sees a few bright possibilities and ignores all the unfavorable probabilities, and plunges recklessly to his doom.

So it is in the present case. This experiment is made with implicit faith in the public, and with the hope that its chapters may at least serve to amuse the minds and gratify the curiosity of all who care to view their pages.

When the future historian of American literature appears upon the scene it is hoped that "A Missourian in the Far West or the World as Seen by a Stranger" will escape his inspection, but if it shouldn't, let him write only "It was a book that was never dramatized."

LEAVING CARROLLTON

I was always fond of visiting new scenes, and observing strange characters and manners. Even when a mere child I began my travels, and made many tours of discovery into foreign parts and unknown regions of my native city, to the frequent alarm of my parents, and the emolument of the town-cryer. As I grew into boyhood, I extended the range of my observations. My holiday afternoons were spent in rambles about the surrounding country. I made myself familiar with all its places famous in history or fable. I knew every spot where a murder or robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen. I visited the neighboring villages, and added greatly to my stock of knowledge by noting their habits and customs, and conversing with their sages and great men. I even journeyed one long summer's day to the summit of a most distant hill, from whence I stretched my eye over many a mile of *terra incognita*, and was astonished to find how vast a globe I inhabited.—WASHINGTON IRVING.

This habit of investigation is an heirloom of mankind, and, therefore, is one of the unavoidable traits that distinguish the human race from the less progressive inhabitants of the earth. From time immemorial down to the present day, the same ungovernable passion of boyhood has been handed down from generation to generation, and I am inclined to believe

that those who yield to it do, after all, only obey their natural instincts. I admit that the love for travel and adventure has lured many a person from the paths of good judgment into the treacherous byways of folly, but I decline to look upon such a fate as a lesson to guide the footsteps of others. In my mind, every person owes it to his welfare to be hopeful and confident. I do not believe it was intended for anyone to live forever in one place. It is his duty to observe the works of nature, and mingle with the wonders of creation.

At any rate, I long ago concluded that there is about as much enjoyment in the world for me as for anyone, and I have never let an opportunity pass without making an effort to drink in some of its pleasures.

Such were my feelings in the summer of 1905 when everybody was going to Portland; and at last I decided that the great West was neither too good nor too distant for me to see. This was a bold and perhaps a reckless conclusion for one like me to form; but I could have no peace of mind till the wild trip was decided upon, so I took the matter into serious consideration.

My plans were rather tedious to make, for there were many disadvantages to be conquered and a great risk to be run in making the trip; but this fact did not deter me from my purpose in the least—in fact, I did not seem to realize the extent of the proposition. However, there were three things to be dealt with before anything could be done. My parents

would not have thought it prudent for me to start on a three thousand mile journey alone; I was not flushed with money; and I had a very inconvenient way of getting around.

I was not long in disposing of the dread of parental interference. There are some people in the world who are never so happy as when tasting forbidden fruit, and, unfortunately, I am one of them. It was my willful determination to keep my schemes a severe secret as long as possible, even if in so doing I was compelled to leave Carrollton unawares to all.

The money question was a more difficult problem. I had only twenty dollars; and while I could easily have had more for the asking, I preferred to rely on my own resources. It was a good while before I could decide what to do. I wrote to a Chicago book firm for agents' terms and complete outfit, which I received three days later. The firm agreed to let me sell the books for any price I might be able to get for them, providing that they receive a dollar for each book they sent me. I thought this was a pretty good offer, so I accepted it, concluding to go as far as I could on the twenty dollars, then to canvass.

The next thing for consideration was my mode of getting around. As I could not walk, I would be obliged to carry my wheel along with me. But whether the railroad company would accept such baggage, I did not know. Upon investigation I learned that all railroad companies are compelled by

law to carry wheeled chairs free of charge when the owner rides on the same train. This was good news, and I began to plan in earnest.

On the morning of June 21 I departed. The train left the station at eight o'clock. My car was crowded with Chicago tourists who were out for good times, and with whom I soon became engaged in conversation; but the conductor soon came along and called for my fare, which interrupted our chat. Of the twenty dollars, I kept five as a reserved fund to be used only in case of an absolute emergency, and gave the remaining fifteen to the conductor, telling him that I wanted to go as far west as that amount would carry me. He took the money, smiled significantly and remarked that I would play hobo getting to Portland on fifteen dollars. I told him not to worry about that part of it, but he only smiled again and passed on.

The curious passengers who had been listening began to ask me all kinds of questions; but I tried to be pleasant, and would answer their queries good-naturedly, but to my own satisfaction.

There were more women than men in the car, and as the book for which I had the agency was of the kind to interest women, I thought I would just try my hand at the new business on the train, realizing, however, that I would have to exercise extreme care that I might not offend the newsboy, who had the exclusive peddlers' right on the train. I passed

my prospectus to a lady across the aisle, and asked her if she would like to buy a copy. She looked at the book for a moment and then asked the price, to which question I answered "Three dollars;" whereupon she gave me twice that amount, and told me to have two copies sent to her address at Hannibal, Missouri.

I thanked her very kindly, and the next time the conductor came through I gave him three dollars of the profit made on the sale of the two books, which paid my fare in full to Denver.

My great luck made my courage swell. Before we reached Kansas City I had sold three books more, the last time being able to get only two and a half dollars each.

By some means the woman directly opposite me, who had paid three dollars each for her books, discovered my schemes, and became hysterically envious of the other buyers. She raved and snorted, she tore her flowing locks and disarranged her bangs until the old car fairly rocked under her awful rage. She demanded that I refund her money; but I shook my head, and she swore that I was a demon, and kept up her spasmodic behavior till the conductor told her that there would be a derailment unless she subdued her manners a little.

We pulled into Union depot about half past ten, and when the train stopped every car took a vomit.

We remained here half an hour. Many of the passen-

gers got off at this station and my car was filled with new ones, a considerable number of whom were bound for Portland.

I was sitting next to the window about the middle of the car as the train began to crawl out of the yards, when a pretty, dimple-faced girl came tiptoeing down the aisle, and asked me if I would share my seat with her. I told her to sit down if it would do her any good. She seemed to be very pleasant and good-natured, but I couldn't help feeling strangely out of place sitting there beside a little duck that I had never seen before.

Every time she would look at me I would turn my head and look out of the window. Sometimes she would smile at me sweetly, as if purposely to test my power to resist such things; but I would only grin blankly and turn the other way. As is generally the case, however, my nerve finally came to my rescue, and I thought I could be as game as she; so I assumed an air of dignity, and waited patiently for a bite. Soon she broke the ice by asking me my name. I tried to be polite, at the same time as stupid and silly as possible, and I asked her to please excuse me. She expressed a surprise, and declared I was the first nameless lobster she had ever met. I let the conversation drag because the passengers were laughing, and she made several remarks to which I did not respond. I sat with my head out of the window half the time, and feigned an intense interest in the country; but I soon found this scheme wouldn't work.

The newsboy came waddling down the aisle with a big basket of California peaches, and as I was peering out of the window with all my might, she tapped me gently on the shoulder, which I took to be a delicate hint for me to "set them up." But I was innocent and did not betray my understanding, and pretty soon she called my attention to the fruit again.

I blated out that she was peach enough for me. I thought this would cook her, but instead, it seemed only to aggravate the situation; for I had scarcely finished my sentence when she puckered up her naughty lips with another one of those overwhelmingly sweet smiles, and whispered "And I presume you like peaches, do you not?"

This was getting entirely too familiar to suit me; but as I had the inside seat, my escape from the scene of embarrassment was not possible. I was tempted to crouch down on the floor in some far corner, or to crawl under the reclining chair in which I sat; but on a second thought, I knew that the manifestations of my disinclination to talk made the girl only the more anxious to tease me. There was but one thing for me to do, and I resolved the second time not to let her out-flirt me.

By this time we were well out of the city limits, and were bounding along at a terrific speed. The old engine was grunting and snorting, and everybody seemed to be jolly. I had quite forgotten my business as book salesman, but as I

had a few dollars in my pocket, I thought I would wait till I got to Denver before trying to sell any more.

The girl in the chair beside me was certainly doing her best to tantalize me. Her mere presence was very provoking, but when she would take on one of those long, lingering, oh-don't-you-wish-I-belonged-to-you expressions, the situation would become too severe for my weak nature, and I would have to open the window to get my breath.

She had a voice capable of appeasing the most ferocious nature, and her deliciously red and juicy lips were simply too tempting for the eyes of a poor creature like me to feast upon. She continued to torment me, first in one way then in another, until I grew so hopelessly desperate that I expanded my chest with about twenty-five cubic feet of air, propped my feet as high as possible on the back of the chair in front of me, sank back, and let off a groan equal to John L. Sullivan in a round with Fitzsimmons. The girl uttered a little shriek and began to fan me; and such fanning she did do!

"Poor fellow," she said, "are you dying?"

I made no reply, but walled my eyes like a sick ape in the last stage of goodbyemonkeymalady, and went into a spasm of new-born agony, jerking and quivering like a Shanghai rooster on a red hot griddle.

During my convulsions the porter bulged into the car and bawled "Lawrence," then, turning to the girl, said quickly, "Miss, this is your station." She left the seat and I breathed the sweet air of relief once more.

I straightened up and looked about me; I saw the passengers smiling and commenting on my strange conduct. Evidently they did not know that it was all a sham; for one man sitting near me asked me if I was subject to such spells. I told him the fits were voluntary, but that they were likely to occur in self-defense as often as necessary. Another man, whose looks I did not like, tried to work up a conversation with me, but as his manners were so very rough and uncultured, I was severely independent and made use of my freedom by refusing to talk to him. He asked me my name, and wanted to know where my home was, but failing to see wherein such information would benefit or even concern him, I told him that I was a Wall street financier from New York and that I was enroute to California where I intended to spend my vacation. He then wanted to know what I meant by traveling alone. I gave him to understand that that was only my business, which rebuke had the desired effect. He walked away and left me alone.

The next station was Topeka. It was two o'clock when we reached this place, where we stopped twenty minutes for dinner.

Being tired and hungry, and not being used to high-priced meals, I was rather extravagant in my orders; and when I had finished eating the depot matron told me that I owed her seventy-five cents. I tried to jew the clerk down, but he politely reminded me that the dining hall was run by

the railroad company and that railroad companies can not be jewed, so I had to dig up.

There were many people in the hall, and I seemed to create quite a bit of curiosity frisking about with my rubber tired wheeled chair in which I cut all kinds of shines while we waited for the time to enter our cars again. I felt as gay as a yearling colt in a fresh field of clover. Nothing except the high price of grub worried me, and after a while I even ceased to worry about that. I resolved to be as swell a sport as any of my fellow tourists so long as I had a cent of money.

When we boarded our cars again I did not get the seat that I had been occupying; in fact I had a hard time finding any kind of a seat, for the train was crowded to its utmost capacity; but after a good deal of trouble I found a vacant chair in the rear.

We rattled along the track at a rapid rate, and it wasn't long till the continuous rumbling of the iron wheels beneath the squeaking trucks had overcast my spirit with a feeling of drowsiness; so I very soon tumbled back into a deep sleep from which I did not awake until three o'clock the next morning.

The engine bell was ringing dolefully when I looked out of the window and saw the dim signs of day in the far east. We had stopped at a little way station to take water, but it was some time before I could realize where we were. The porter, who was swinging his lantern as he passed through the car, told me that we had just crossed the state border.

I rubbed my eyes in hope of becoming wider awake, but when we began to move again I was soon buzzed into another nap. At half past eight the porter woke me and said the next station was Denver. I rubbed my eyes and yawned lazily until we stopped in the yards of Union Depot, which point we reached sharply at nine o'clock.

A DAY IN DENVER

Denver was far from what I expected to see, or rather, my expectations lacked a good deal in being Denver; but as it is quite impossible for one who has never been so far west to form a correct conclusion of the real greatness of a western metropolis, I was much surprised when I saw the real, the ideal Denver.

The day was gloriously fine. The air was strangely rare and balmy, and the atmosphere was in that serene state of clearness which is characteristic only of Colorado climate. In the yards of the station a dozen long trains lay like great spotted dragons hissing and panting, and anxiously awaiting an opportunity to escape from disagreeable surroundings. The streets were wide and well paved, level and very clean; but in some places were clouded by a confusion of electric wires that swung between the tops of the great buildings like massive cobwebs suspended in midair. I could not but feel a degree of triumph in that Denver was now mine to see and enjoy; but mingled with my triumph was a feeling of awe and consternation for the terrifying whir and whiz of metropolitan industry. The thoroughfares were thronged with people hurrying to and from their various places of business; cars

chased each other up and down the streets as far as I could see; horses, carriages, moving vans and automobiles of every description swept by one after another; and the busy hum of traffic and commerce rose on every side.

After being shaved by the depot barber—I should say after he was paid, for he charged me fifteen cents which was a big item to me then—I took a car on Seventeenth street and went about two blocks toward town to a restaurant for breakfast. I can hardly call it breakfast, either, for it was ten o'clock when I reached the restaurant; but as I had missed my last supper and breakfast, I thought I would just try a ten o'clock lunch, anyway. I could have eaten at the depot, but the fear of Topeka prices made me realize that I had had one railroad dinner, and I thought I would seek another place this time just for a change, if for nothing more.

I had to wait several minutes for my time to be served, and in the meantime it was my supreme delight to make the acquaintance of a former citizen of Carroll county. He was a Mr. Levan, of Missoula, Montana. He sat on the opposite side of the table waiting to be served, and we put in the time talking. When I told him that I was from Carrollton the first thing he said was "Do you know Bob Lemon?" Of course, I had to laugh at the suddenness of the question, and when I told him that everybody in Missouri knew Mr. Lemon he wanted to know if Bob was still a Democrat. I do not remember the exact answer I made him, but I tried to create

the impression that Mr. Lemon stumped the state for Joe Folk during the last campaign. The man laughed as if he knew better, and related several funny incidents connected with his intimate acquaintance and former business relations with Mr. Lemon.

At this moment the waiter appeared with my order, and close behind him followed another waiter with a tray for Mr Levan. The bill of fare consisted of steak fried tender with onions; hot buns; French fried potatoes; and two or three other dishes that I thought I would experiment with. I ate like an epicure and disposed of things with remarkable rapidity; but Mr. Levan was through and gone before I finished eating. When I left the table the clerk refused to accept any money, saying that he would stand sponsor for what I had eaten.

I then went back to the depot to sell books. There were not many people in the waiting rooms. I saw a policeman standing near the rear entrance. He was a rough, ill-natured looking fellow, and it was with difficulty that I summoned courage to ask his permission to sell my book in the depot. He at once gave me to understand that the depot was no place for vagrants, and wanted to know where I hailed from. It was such an insult to me to be called a vagrant that I made him some kind of an impertinent reply, and darted off into the smoking room to count my money. I found that I had only six dollars of my own, but I was not the least bit discouraged. I was too mad for such foolishness.

For a time I was at a loss to know what to do, or what step to take next. I had a dull headache due, perhaps, to excessive sleep; my throat was sore and I felt ill. Other things seemed to be conspiring against my progress. But my courage proved to be a good friend, and when the people in the rooms began to increase in number and to mingle more friendly with each other, I felt more like myself.

I looked at the clock. It was almost noon, and I hadn't sold a single book! This was a very disagreeable fact to think about; but when the clock struck twelve and the old "cop" who had forbidden me to canvass in the depot went off the shift, and turned his duties over to a man of very different manner and temperament, who assumed authority over the station.

When the new officer saw me he walked up and commenced to talk to me. At first I was rather shy of him, but a few minutes' conversation with him convinced me that he was a genteel fellow. He asked me where I was going, and I answered by letting him know the whole truth: That I was out for a good time and that I was pressed for money. He seemed to have great sympathy for me, and wished me good luck on my journey.

He had turned away and was about to leave when I drew my prospectus from my pocket and asked for the freedom of the depot for the sale of books, which he cheerfully granted. He looked at the pospectus for a moment, then

bought a book, giving me his name and address and three dollars, which was the price I asked for the book this time.

As I had not yet reported to the book company for the books I had sold on the train, I thought it best to do so while I had an opportunity. So I secured paper and pen at the news-stand, and sent in the six orders.

Things seemed to be very dull for a while; but when the trains began to come in with their great numbers of passengers the rooms were crowded with impatient travelers, relieving the situation somewhat. Among the people in the depot was an old colored woman who found it convenient to locate near me. She carried in her hand a bird-cage which contained a small Brazilian parrot that was enraged over something. Evidently the bird had just recovered from a bath, for its feathers were still damp and its actions reminded me strongly of a small boy pouting after a face-washing by his mother. I do not think the bird could do anything but swear, and I doubt if a Dago this side of the sea ever had a bigger stock of cuss words than this little growler made use of here in the depot.

Some one pointed me out to another person near by as a mutton-headed idiot from Missouri, the home of the buzzards. The parrot took up the slander with appalling originality, and started an outburst of profanity that forced all the modest women to retire from the room. I was the target for the oral bullets; and after the little, green devil had bemeaned me

to the lowest standard imaginable, he repeated the gag on my native state in such humiliating terms and with such fury and rage that I was compelled to leave the building in order to maintain my self-respect. I got on the observation car and rode till five o'clock, visiting nearly all the interesting neighborhoods of the city.

When I returned to the depot, it was just fifty-five minutes till train time. I bought a ticket after selling one book more, then left on the first train for Cheyenne.

AMONG THE COWBOYS

When I reached the capital of Wyoming I thought if there was a jumping off place in the world I certainly had found it. There were no cars, no lights in the streets, and the depot was closed. The question how to dispose of myself for the remainder of the night was a serious one, and one that had to be dealt with immediately. It was midnight, pouring down rain, and very cold. I went to the waiting room and banged on the door till the windows on the opposite side of the building began to rattle, but I couldn't raise a soul.

I was just about ready to give up hope when I heard a yell in the distance that made my hair stand straight. A few minutes passed, and I heard the clatter of horses' feet not far away. Another moment, and a cavalcade of cowboys dashed across the tracks in front of the depot. One of the boys caught sight of me sitting on the platform of the depot, and began to yank his bridle; but his plunging broncho went several yards before being brought to subjection. The fellow rode back, looked inquiringly at me, and asked, "What's the trouble, pardner?"

"Hard luck," I answered.

"Where are you from?" he continued.

"Missouri," was my reply.

"Then the game is up," he said with a smile. "Can you ride horseback?"

I nodded that I could, and he told me to climb on. After some heroic scrambling and a good deal of puffing and blowing I managed to get into the saddle. Although I hadn't the least idea where the cowboy would take me, I was willing to leave that matter entirely with him, for well I knew that I would not land in a place more disagreeable than the platform of the depot. But the horse, too, seemed anxious for a say-so in the determining of my destination. His hind feet left the earth as soon as I fell into the deep saddle, and for a time I had a starry prospect for a free trip to the Milky Way rather than for a pleasant sojourn in Cheyenne. Perhaps all that averted this rank violation to the law of gravity was the strength of the saddle girt; and goodness only knows what would have happened had I been left to the mercy of the beast. Fortunately, the man had not yet given me the reins, and he swung bravely to them till the animal relented. He then pulled his overcoat off aud spread it over the willow back of my chair to protect the chair from the rain. We started down the railroad track in the darkness of the night through the blowing rain, the man leading the wild horse with one hand, and pushing my inanimate companion before him with the other.

After going quite a little way down the track we came to a camp where a dozen or more cowboys were sitting together under a large tent, with a fire burning brightly on the outside. They were drinking freely, and were in just the right stage to be foolish. As we were passing, one of the boys ran out from the camp and flopped himself into my chair which my good friend was so willingly pushing along. This, of course, brought us to a stop, and then the other cowboys ran out, flourishing their revolvers in the firelight, and carousing around in a rough manner. The man who was in charge of the chair, the horse and me, had a hard time trying to get the ruffians to allow us to proceed, and not until he had explained my condition and situation fully were we given the freedom of the highway.

As we went on our way, the fellow in the front of me began to talk. He told me that he, too, was from Missouri, and that he was taking me to a camp where he and one of his companions had been staying for the last two months.

I could tell from his talk that he had not been in the West long enough to take on the wild customs and conduct, yet it was plain to me that he was not a fresh arrival from Missouri. He was very inquisitive, but I was glad to answer all his questions. In a few minutes we came to a great hill which was too steep for any horse to climb. We wound around the mound until we approached a large excavation made in the side of the hill. Here my friend lived. The hole in the bank was his house.

I slid off the horse into my chair and went in with him. In one corner of the strange dwelling I was struck by the sight of a pair of dirty overalls, a saddle and a rawhide whip, a skillet, a few unwashed dishes, a can of beer, and a spittoon—all piled together in a most repulsive heap. The room was dimly lighted by a little six-inch pocket lantern hanging sleepily by small cotton cord from the center of the ceiling, the dimness of the rays depriving me of a full appreciation of my surroundings. I saw a long pine plank extending the entire length of the room, with each end resting between the logs of the walls, and supported in the middle by a poker propped uprightly under it; this was their dining table. "Get up, pal," shouted my new companion to a fellow who was snoozing peacefully on his bunk behind me. "Get up, we've got company from old Mizzoo." I turned to speak to the dreamer, who only threw back the cover and yawned. My friend called him again, and succeeded in rousing him. He turned toward me and greeted me in his habitually rough way, asking me if I was hungry. I told him that I had not yet had my supper, and he assured me very kindly that he would soon have the irons hot and kettle boiling.

One of the boys kindled a fire while the other sliced off a chunk of venison; and while we waited for the things to cook, they kept me busy answering questions. I was perfectly free with them, and they seemed to enjoy having me with them quite as much as I enjoyed it myself. The more I

saw of the boys the better I liked them; yet I couldn't help feeling strangely out of place in their hut. They insisted upon my taking a drink of beer, but I was firm in my refusal. In a very few minutes the fragrance of the frying steak was working upon my appetite.

Talk about your cooking schools! Don't stand it girls, for what's the use, when a cowboy can fix up such a tempting meal in fifteen minutes? Talk about teaching the women the art of home-making—it's nonsense. Any girl who marries a cowboy and lets him do the cooking will feast the rest of her days.

I felt wide awake after partaking of the wild, Wyoming supper, and I think both of the boys did too, for sometimes they would ask me a dozen questions at once. Finally I told them that Carrollton was my town, and one of the boys—the one whom the other called Jack—threw up his hands in surprise and exclaimed, "Carrollton! Why, that's where my old sweetheart lives. Do you know her? Her name is Agnes."

"I know a great many Agneses, but what is your Agnes' last name?" said I.

"Guess," said he.

I named over all the Agneses that I ever heard of, but the list did not include his lady. He sat with his mouth open in anxious suspense ready to swallow her name, and looked disappointed because I failed to mention the right one.

He drew a letter from his pocket and told me to listen.

Carrollton, Mo., June 22, 1905.

Dear Jack:—I have been thinking about you all day, and wondering how you are passing these long summer days. More than one of the boys here have been trying to strike up a flirtation with me, but they don't succeed, because I remember my beau of former days. I want to see you give up your one bad habit; quit getting drunk, and be the dear great fellow that you really are. If not for the sake of your own soul, be good just for me, won't you?

Oh, yes; there is a sensation in Carrollton and vicinity. Joel Williams left for parts unknown yesterday morning. It is known that he started west, and perhaps you may have a visitor. If you see or hear anything of him be sure to write me, for telegrams are flying thick and fast to ascertain his whereabouts.

Hoping that I may soon have a letter, I bid you be good, asking you to think kindly of your little correspondent, who will certainly remember you in her prayers tonight.

Your faithful friend,

AGNES.

My curiosity was wrought up to a high pitch, but I could not persuade the boy to tell me Agnes' last name. He seemed to regard her with much love and reverence, and perhaps thought it was none of my business.

As I have said, I did not feel well in this dugout, but I talked with the boys till daylight when one of them suggested that we go to Cheyenne to a dance which was to occur among the cowboys who had come in from all the surrounding hills and plains for this special occasion. The motion was carried,

and after a second breakfast shortly after sunrise, the boys began to primp and tog themselves out in their very best apparel.

A fellow came along the road in a lumber wagon, and we all got in and rode to town. As we drove through the streets of the rude city, my attention was attracted by the unusually large number of policemen; but I was told that an extra force was necessary to maintain order when one of these dances was in progress. We stopped and got out in front of a tall building where a large number of men had collected. I wanted to be on time, so I took an elevator and ascended to the ninety-ninth story, and landed in a large, luxuriously furnished hall, where I found a dozen young ladies playing cards. They looked at me curiously for a moment; then one of them, with a sneering elevation of her nose, remarked, "H–m, I'll bet that guy is from Missouri."

"But ladies," I tried to explain, "I came only to see the dance."

They went on with their card-playing as though I had not spoken, and I imagined that they had not heard me. I accordingly gave vent to a terrific verbal explosion of my presence with a violent and prolonged repetition of my excuse, but I failed to lift the fog of indifference that hovered between the girls and me. An Irish dynamiter could not have blown away the cold mist of such a frigid welcome. My frantic efforts to avert the calamity of being totally ignored were sad

and futile. The frosty reception that I had undergone made me feel like a minus quantity, and as weak and wanting as a fellow who had lost something he never had. My case was hopeless, and I retired to a remote corner of the room and returned thanks that I had not been tossed out of the window.

While I was sitting there with my head down and my hands over my face I happened to look up, and noticed that the girls had laid their cards aside and were preparing for the dance. There was a pitcher of beer sitting on the table, and one of the girls was thoughtful enough to wonder if I would not like to have a drink. She poured out a glassful and brought it to me, asking me to partake of the frozen broth. I took a sip for politeness' sake and gave the glass to her.

"What made you slobber in the goblet?" she demanded severely.

"I do not slobber, madam," was my cool and emphatic reply.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she continued, "but you did slobber; for there is more beer in the glass now than there was in the first place. But I guess you are not poison, and I'll just drink the beer myself, slobbers and all."

She lifted the glass to her lips and drained it dry.

"My, but you think you're some!" said I to myself, as I watched her totter under the influence of the liquor.

In a short time she was foolishly drunk, and I thought I would have some fun by starting a conversation with her.

"What is your name?"

"My name is Vita."

"Is that your first or last name?"

"My last."

"Well, then, what is the first part?"

"Malta."

"Oh, this is Malta Vita, the celebrated breakfast food, is it?"

"I suppose so."

"Do you ever go hunting in the hills?"

"No; I'm afraid a wolf might eat me up."

"Hee, yum, lordie! Wouldn't that wolf have a good mess, though?"

"Confound you, man," said the girl, as she sprang to her feet boiling with fury, "if you don't shut your impudent mouth I'll hurl you down the elevator shaft and come down with a tub and a case knife, scrape you up, and work you into a batch of soft soap."

Such a threat! You just better believe I shut up, and that, in a hurry. I saw one of the girls in the rear of the room rise and lean forward over a small table where she had won a large sum at a game of poker. Silver dollars were scattered all over the table before her, and she held a roll of bills firmly in one of her hands. She stared me fiercely in the face for a moment, then placed her other hand on the bright handle of her revolver that was swinging from her belt.

"Don't shoot, oh don't shoot!" I cried reproachfully, thinking she was about to fire at me in defense of her wild sister, whose displeasure I had incurred by the boldness of my tongue.

"Oh, don't be scared; I wouldn't hurt you for anything," said the girl lightly, which frightened me more than ever, and made me think that she was talking for effect, or rather, to gain a favorable opportunity to mete out a horrible revenge on me for being so trivial with her tipsy chum.

I was allowed to reflect for a moment on the danger of my situation and the gravity of my whole predicament. Although it was distressing to me to be shut up in such a place, I was afraid that, if I made any move toward leaving, I would be followed by a volley of bullets from the guns of the drunken women; and I deemed it wiser to grin and face my peril.

By this time all the girls were dead drunk. They cursed and swore like old hands at the business, and talked about the boys they had scared to death. Some of them played with their cartridges and revolvers while the others stood before the mirrors fumbling with the fuzz on their upper lips, and trying to develop an improvement in the art of chewing gum.

One of the girls pressed a button on the side of the wall. This was a signal for the boys to come from below. Three or four loads came up on the elevator, and the others came

stamping up the stairway like a herd of Texas steers on a stampede. After the boys were seated the house was called to order by an unusually ugly little woman who entered through a side door. An attempt to describe her would be a huge undertaking, but I remember that she was almost bald, was cross-eyed and dish-faced. Her ears stuck out like a dollar's worth of tea on each side of her head, which, from all indications, was as devoid of substance on the inside as it was on the outside. I shall never forget the appearance of her mouth. It was exceedingly high in the middle and dropped at the corners, and looked more like a new moon than anything else I ever saw.

"Gentlemen of the ranches," said she, "Miss Jones will pass her beer while the fiddlers tune. Let everybody drink and be merry."

This was quite enough of Cheyenne for me. I took advantage of the first opportunity to escape from the dancing apartments, and after selling a few books I left the town for other fields.

RIDING WITH THE INDIANS

Although the shortage of money compelled me to stop and sell books twice, my trip as far as Cheyenne was without any serious inconvenience. But such luck was not to attend me throughout my merry chase. The deserts of Wyoming and Idaho which next confronted me are very sparsely settled, and the stations along the railroads are many miles apart. In many cases these little villages are inhabited only by small colonies of Greek or Italian section workmen in the employ of the railroad company, and they seldom consist of anything more than a few tents, two or three saloons and a flower garden cultivated at the expense of the railroad company.

Not being acquainted with this condition of the country, I left Cheyenne with only my ticket to Greenriver, Wyoming, and the small sum of fifty cents, relying upon my success at book selling for my support. I had fallen into the thoughtless habit of carrying my chair with me without having it checked; but acting upon the suggestion of the depot master, when I was ready to board the train for Greenriver I checked the vehicle as my baggage.

My train was a local, and was almost empty. Greenriver is a many-mile run from Cheyenne, and I was forced to invest the contents of my pocket in a meal at supper time and when I arrived at my destination, I was without a penny.

We were two hours behind the schedule, and did not reach Greenriver till two o'clock Saturday morning. This place happened to be the end of a railroad division where all the trains changed crews. My chair was in the baggage car checked to this point, and, of course, it was taken off; but in their haste to redeem the train of its tardiness, the new conductor and brakemen neglected to help me from my car. As it was dangerous for me to undertake the task of getting off without assistance, there was but one thing for me to do, and that was to remain on the train and leave my chair in Greenriver.

When I was called upon for my fare I told the conductor that I was riding against my will, and that I didn't have any money. At first he was indifferent to my explanation and threatened to treat me "as he treated other hobos" by putting me off at the next station; but when I produced a duplicate of the check number of my chair he smiled apologetically, and said he either would provide me with a return ticket to Greenriver, or would see that the chair was brought to me at the next station, Granger. I preferred not to retrace my steps, and when we reached Granger he telegraphed for the chair to be sent on the first train.

I suppose the lonely hours that I spent in that little depot waiting for the train will linger in my memory as long as I live. The morning was clear, and the stars were sparkling brightly in the firmament. Good old Father Moon was missing from his high place in the heavens, but the crystal eye of each member of his great family appeared to be winking in vain for a smile of recognition from the cold, dark face of the earth.

I was compelled to sit in the waiting room of the depot two hours for the arrival of the next train with my chair, without which I was powerless to seek a better place.

The spot was deserted. The wind whipped madly around the building; the shutters rattled mournfully at the windows and the danger signal outside the door creaked and made me think the place was being haunted by ghosts. Yet there were moments of deathlike stillness which generated all kinds of hot currents of resistance in my nervous system, and so intense was the voltage of terror that no thought was too horrible to flash like lightning through my frightened brain. Through the window, I thought I could see the green eyes of a hundred coyotes rushing down the mountain side toward the depot. I imagined I heard a hungry wolf already sniffing at the sill outside the door. My chest throbbed convulsively with fear, and with such vehemence that I finally lost control of my sense of reason and broke into a sudden desire to yell. I thought if Daniel Boone could repel the attacks of the

Indians in his early day by making a noise in his tent, I could stay the on-rush of a wild beast by repeating the process; so I began to whistle.

The keen discord of my shrill notes pierced the dark air far and wide, and I soon felt well fortified against wild beasts and "varments." I suppose the rats and other rodents in the attic of the depot thought I was trying to serenade them; for, in its efforts to locate the source of the conflicting strains a little mouse ran up my sleeve and became entangled in the lining of my coat. You may be sure it felt as big as a prairie dog to me as it scratched at my arm, and that I proceeded to my own rescue as well as to the mouse's without delay, by unbuttoning my coat in order to give it plenty of room to escape; but in less time than it took the mouse to get into my sleeve, it nipped a hole in the cloth and emerged from the linen prison.

Day was beginning to dawn, and I heard the sharp shriek of a locomotive which soon drew a great train alongside the little platform. I thrust my hand into my inside vest pocket where I kept a little day book which contained the names and addresses of my book customers, but the book was gone. I felt a small roll of paper in my pocket, and I drew it out to see what it might be. I recollected that I had put the package into my pocket some days before, but I could not recall what it contained. I began to loosen the cover. When I unfolded the wrapper, oh joy! what do you think I

found? There it was, just as fresh and green as ever—the five dollar bill that I had laid away for hard times on the road between Carrollton and Kansas City!

I looked out of the window and saw the baggageman lifting my chair from the express car; but I raised the sash and told him that I would go with him if he would help me to the car steps. He loaded the chair into the train again, and assisted me in getting into the chair car.

It fell to my lot to ride with a tribe of Indians. There was only one vacant seat in the car, and I was forced to sit beside a squaw who was nursing a sick papoose. The squaw was drunk, and was as dirty as any human being I ever saw. She was short and thick in stature, and bore a striking facial resemblance to that famous cartoon character, Mrs. Katzenjammer. Her child was about two years old, and, like his mother, was coated with a six months' accumulation of dust and grease.

I gave the conductor four dollars. He seemed to understand that that was all I had, and took the money without asking any questions. The porter came along, and I gave him the other dollar and ordered him to go into the dining car and bring me a first class breakfast.

While the meal was being prepared I had several scraps with the red youngster, who kept me busy protecting my face from claws and my hair from his long fingers. He was not very sick, but his mother thought he was almost dead, and

was giving him her undivided attention. She tried to be the boss, but the young imp was master of all ceremonies, and when she would try to force him to swallow a mouthful of the "great spirit tonic" he would siege the spoon and sling it to the other end of the car.

The porter soon brought me my breakfast which consisted of everything a king could wish for. It was the finest meal that I had tasted since I left Carrollton. In fact, it was just such a meal as one gets when he dines with Robt. Miles, George Schaffer, Ed Creel or—oh, I might mention a hundred.

I sat the tray in my lap and unfolded the white cloth that covered the dishes. At this moment the sick baby went into one of his spasms and kicked over a cup of hot coffee, scalding himself and his mother. The porter, who was looking on, immediately hurried the squaw and her papoose into the smoker and brought me another cup of coffee which I was permitted to sip at my leisure.

I finished eating, and then the squaw and her baby returned to their seat. The old woman was as mad as a hornet because the coffee had stained her new, red blanket; but she was too drunk to express her anger in any way but to shake her fist at me. She sang her baby to sleep and she, herself, soon began to nod. She was leaning toward me, and as her nap deepened into sleep, she sank closer and closer to me, until her head almost touched mine.

I found a pin in my coat and I decided that I would have to use it. I stuck the sharp point of the pin through the red blanket into the arm of the ugly Indian, who jumped up with a yell and ran into the smoker with her papoose.

The other Indians in the car had not given me any trouble. There were several intelligent looking half breeds among them, and as soon as the squaw left her seat a young man came to sit by me. He had some education and made a good appearance. I sold him one of my books, and he took the prospectus to the rear of the car and began to turn the leaves and show the illustrations to the chief of the tribe who was so well pleased with them that he, also, bought a book.

All the Indians were dressed in blankets; none of them could speak English fluently, and their communications with each other consisted of words from both English and Indian languages. It was a bit hard, too, for me to interpret so many of the hand signs with which they tried to emphasize their speech when they wanted me to get a minute understanding of some particular point in the course of their almost wholly incomprehensible jabber.

We arrived in Pocatello, Idaho, about noon. The Indians left the train, and the other passengers were given twenty minutes for dinner. I got off and spent the time canvassing. My success was marvelous. One man, who was boozy, bought a book for which I asked the moderate price

of three dollars; but he said he had more money than he needed, and insisted that he would as leave pay five dollars as three. You may be sure that he did not have to insist long. I put the money into my pocket, took his name and address hurriedly and went on with my canvassing, making another sale before the train was ready to leave.

Not long, and I was on my way again in gay spirits, and feeling exceedingly fine. The car had been cleaned, the seats dusted, white cloths pinned across the backs of the chairs, and the whole interior of the coach made to look fresh and inviting. Many new passengers started from Pocatello to Portland, and as all the red men had left the train, my associations were pleasanter and much more congenial than they had been during the morning and forenoon. I counted my money again, and found that I had fourteen dollars, ten of which was all my own. I was hungry, and ordered my dinner to be sent in from the dining car. As there was no papoose to upset my coffee or spill my tea, I ate leisurely and enjoyed every mouthful to the fullest extent.

"Riding in a Pullman, and swallowing a dollar three times a day!" I soliloquized, as I munched hot biscuits and fried salmon, "Joel Williams is certainly putting on airs once in his life, if he *never* sees the Fair."

When the porter appeared for the dishes after I had finished eating, he asked me what it was that I was selling at the depot in Pocatello; and when I replied that I was a book agent he asked me to show my goods.

This porter was not a negro, but a handsome little German, who seemed to be very popular with all the passengers. While he sat on the arm of a chair turning the pages of the prospectus and asking questions regarding the nature of the book, the big fat conductor who had taken charge of the train at Pocatello, tipped up from the rear of the car where he had been sitting in conversation with one of the passengers, and leaned over the little man's shoulder.

"What's on hands now, John?" asked the conductor.

"A book agent," quickly replied the porter.

"Is *he* the fellow?" pointing to me.

"Yes."

"Then we must all patronize him because he looks like he is a Missourian. Shell out your money."

In only a few moments I sold three books more, netting me the handsome sum of six dollars, which I proudly deposited in my safest pocket.

We slowly puffed our way upgrade through the barren tracts of land, steaming through narrow cuts and ravines, and winding along the curves in the crooked road, until I could restrain myself from sleep no longer. I lowered the back of the reclining chair, and was soon deriving full benefit from its soft cushions.

I slept soundly several hours. I was aroused from my stupor by the bright, red rays of the setting sun shining through the car windows. The train had stopped, and the

passengers were walking restlessly up and down the aisles of the car. I felt very strange.

"Who am I, where am I, and what am I doing here!" I wondered.

"Oh yes, I know; this is Shoshone, and I must get off."

SHOSHONE

The experiences in my three days' journey prior to my arrival in Shoshone had been full of lucky happenings. I had been thrown into association with people whose habits and customs were strangely different from my own, and I had acquired that inquisitiveness of mind and tongue which never fails to divulge the nativity of a typical Missourian when he wanders from the borders of his own state. I had also seen enough of the world to know that there were good reasons for me to use every precaution against falling into close companionship with any of the smooth talking individuals who were always trying to advise me where to go, what to do and how to do it, and who might have various kinds of traps set for me to fall into. I had never traveled extensively before, and I realized that I was rather green along this line; but I was confident that a little common sense on my part would do more than all the suggestions of strangers toward piloting me through this "land of unnumbered mysteries," and I very naturally swallowed everything anyone might say; but I assimilated a much smaller proportion of the cheap matter.

I decided, when I reached Shoshone, that I had traveled far enough in my happy-go-lucky uncertain fashion; and I was ready and willing to settle down to hard canvassing, and to earn a respectable amount of money before going a mile farther.

I found the little city an ideal place for such work. The town was not a large one—only three thousand inhabitants—but the streets were so level and so smooth that I was afforded easy access to every door in town; and I resolved to work incessantly until I had gained enough to carry me on to the coast.

"Come, go with me to the Columbia," said a half grown boy to me, as I strolled idly up and down a street after my train had left the depot. The speaker wore a red cap with letters written on the crown to indicate his vocation; but it was so dark that I could not read the words, and I was at serious loss to know what to do. How could a Missourian tell what "Columbia" meant in Idaho? It might mean a saloon or a pool hall, but more probably, I feared, a ball room.

"What is the Columbia," I asked, "a livery stable or a dancing pavilion?"

"Neither, my friend. It is a regular Missouri hotel," replied the polite boy.

"Then pardon me," I begged, "and I will go with you to the Columbia."

The young man started in an up-town direction, and walked so fast that I could hardly keep up. Two or three other boys joined him at the first crossing, and they quickened their pace and soon were almost a block ahead of me; but I followed like a belated straggler from a flock of sheep, using every effort to overtake them. After going several blocks I came to the realization that I was losing ground every minute. I stopped and shouted, "Wait a minute, lad, you're going too fast."

All the boys except the one in the red cap went on; he turned and walked back to meet me.

"You came from Missouri, didn't you?" said the young porter, as he put his helping hand on the back of my chair to lighten my load, a smile of amusement playing over his boyish face.

"How in the Sam Hill do you know where I came from?" I asked in astonishment.

"Now I'm dead sure of it," said the boy, trying to evade my question.

"What do you mean?" said I, sharply.

"You told me to 'wait a minute,'" explained the boy, "in Idaho they say halt; when you hear anyone using such expressions as 'Sam Hill', 'ground hog case', or 'hog killing time', you can set it down that he is a Missourian.

We changed the subject of conversation several times before we reached the boarding house. The walks were

rough in places, and I felt like swearing. As we passed through the business section of town all the kids, ranging in size from a two year old tot up, turned out and followed us. At first I did not know how to take this; but I soon learned that it was the chair, not I, that was so attractive. The children had never seen anything on the order of this chair, and of course I could not blame them for their inquiring survey of the vehicle; but their following me in growing numbers every where I went was a different thing, and although the scarcity of rats was conspicuous, I feared that I had suddenly become the Pied Piper of Shoshone. But when we turned on Front street, not far from our coveted destination, we met a policeman; and one word from him scattered those urchins as unceremoniously as a ghost would scatter big feet and thick lips at a negro camp meeting.

After arriving at the hotel I was astonished to find that I was about to register at the swellest house in town. I looked about me in the large office, and met the gaze of a dozen curious guests who stared at me as though they wondered what had become of my attendant.

"Where are you from?" asked a middle aged man who was pacing up and down the long floor with an Havana cigar in his mouth.

"I am from Missouri," I modestly replied.

"Carrollton?" quickly inquired another man, looking up from the paper that he had been reading.

"Who are you?" I demanded rather rudely.

"I am a resident of Shoshone. I have just been reading of a young man who mysteriously disappeared from Carrollton last Wednesday morning. Great alarm is felt in that city because of his untimely departure. Do you know anything of him?"

"I confess. I am that fellow."

"And you left home without any money, did you not?"

"I started with twenty dollars."

'Plucky fellow! But how do you account for the long trip that you have made on such a small sum?"

"Easy enough. The world is full of good people who are always ready to help a fellow. I have been treated well where ever I have been."

"Where are you going?"

"To Portland. Is supper ready?"

The man who had detained me from my evening meal by his questions proved to be the landlord. He conducted me to the dining room through a series of intervening rooms where a number of the guests were sitting at long tables playing cards. I did not feel humiliated at finding myself in a saloon; for in the West barrooms go hand in hand with all hotels, and he who poses as a reformer would certainly have a hard time finding a decent lodging place in Shoshone. All that I disliked was the temptation that was thrown about me. To be sure my surroundings were not as pleasant as they

would have been in an eastern town; yet they were by no means unendurable.

I passed on into the dining room, where the proprietor left me in company with a Japanese waiter.

Even this little copper colored midget came in for his share of sport at my expense. "Missouriko?" he exclaimed, as he looked me over, a smile breaking out in his brown face, and a pleasant expression beaming from his bright little eyes.

I did not understand what he meant, and he was not satisfied. He walked to the end of the room where a map was hanging. "Missouriko!" said he, pointing to my native state with a grin.

The menu card was another thing that I could not translate. It utterly stunned me. I did not know what dishes to check, because I could not understand French, and I was afraid that I would get something that I could not eat. As a last resort, I told the little Jap who was standing near me, to bring me something good, no matter what it might be.

"Greeny Missouriko! I knew it," said the waiter with with proud satisfaction, as he fanned through the door into the kitchen to bring my supper.

When I left the table I returned to the office, and after writing a report to the book company in Chicago for the books I had sold during the day, I went to the telegraph office and sent a message to Carrollton announcing my safe arrival in Shoshone. Returning to the hotel, I asked the proprietor

to show me my room for my eyes had become filled with sand from riding so far in the deserts; besides, I was very tired and sleepy, and wanted to get a full night's rest.

Sunday morning broke unusually fair. It was almost eight o'clock when I arose. The sun was shining brightly, and the air was soft and calm. When breakfast was ready I felt that other peoples' fun had begun; and I was right, for I had not been at the table a minute when the storm broke out anew.

What a nauseating mystery to hear strangers say "Puke" every hour in the day! Yes, I was from Missouri; but how, oh how, did everybody else know so much?

For a good while I tried to figure out what it was in my personality that was such a traitor to my mother state; but I soon learned that it was useless to try to solve this puzzle. The more I studied about it, the deeper the mystery grew. Hard as it was for me to do, I saw plainly that I would have to adjust my sensitive nature to the will of the people of Idaho, and that I would suffer if I did not take their uncomplimentary remarks good-naturedly.

Sunday was just the same as any other day in Shoshone. The stores were open, the shops were running, and no one appeared to know that it was the Sabbath day. I was in Rome, and after a good deal of thought, I decided that I would do "as the Roman does." As it was the custom for the natives to go right on with their work, Sunday o no

Sunday, I could see no unpardonable sin in an effort on my part to sell a few books. Therefore, after breakfast I set out to let the world know my business. I established a uniform price on my book, and commenced with the guests at the hotel, with whom by this time I had become an object of the keenest interest. I sold four books before leaving, which, I thought, was a pretty good starter for a Sunday morning business. I next visited the business section of the town, borrowing a little time from each merchant in the city, who, in nearly every case either bought a book or hired me to go away and leave him alone. Sometimes I would roll into a store and meet the manager who would hurry to the register, draw out a coin, and say, "Here, young man, is a half dollar for you; now run along, we are busy today, and don't care to buy any stuffed birds."

At first, these donations grated painfully on my sense of pride. I was afraid the people were looking upon me as a regular street vagabond; and if there is anything in the world that stirs up my wrath it is for some one to get presumptuous of me and act on his fore-drawn conclusion before giving me a chance to assert myself. I realized that I might be reduced to beggary at any time, but I determined to let charity be my last refuge.

But another thought struck me. What a fool I would be not to take all that was to be had without any solicitation on my part! If I had gained favor with the people through

lawful motives, there was certainly no disgrace in my profiting by such favor. Besides, I thought to receive all the money that was offered me would be a cute and clever way to revenge those who might offer it on any supposition that would detract from my dignity and good name.

After finishing my work among the merchants, I slowly rolled down Guinea avenue where two telegraph linemen stood entangled in loose wires discussing a question that seemed to be occasioning some serious thought. As I neared the scene, I heard one of them say, "Ask him."

"A chance to get even," thought I, as I noted their rough appearance.

"Say, mister, are you much of an electrician?" asked one, as I was passing.

"No, thank goodness," I replied impudently, as I increased my speed and darted by, "I am a Missourian."

"Hold on," said the same fellow, after I had left him several yards behind. "Did you say you are from Missouri?"

"Yes, I did! Have you any objections?"

"I'd guess no! We must shake hands with you; we haven't seen a Missourian for a long time. What town are you from?"

"Carrollton."

"We hail from St. Joe; but I suppose we are not perfect strangers to you in Shoshone. Glad we met you. Good day."

I strolled on down the street, catching the eyes of all the old maids and grandmothers who happened to be at the windows of their respective homes, and amusing all the youngsters who chose to follow my trail. No matter where I went, nor what kind of people I met, everybody was busy at something. About eleven o'clock I heard a church bell ringing. How strange it did sound when all the rest of the town was so deeply absorbed in worldly affairs! A little farther down the street was the church. I went in. Ah, it was a Catholic church, the kind that I did not understand. There, at that mystic altar, knelt the priest before a bust of the Virgin Mary. At his right, seven candles were burning; at his left, lay a little girl dead! I had crept into the church unnoticed by the worshipers. My heart thumped with timidness; but I stayed till the funeral was over.

To continue. It was noon, and I had had success at my work. I went back to the hotel and astonished all the guests by reporting ten books sold! After dinner, while I was enjoying a few minutes' rest in the office-room, several of the boarders whom I had not yet seen, came to me and had their names enlisted on the growing roll of my customers. I regretted that I had not set a larger price on my book; for I believed that I would have sold as many books at three dollars each as I had sold at two and a half. But good enough was well, and I took great consolation in the fact that it is a good thing not to be a hog.

Again I left the house for another round among the people. I labored an hour before selling a book. My time was not lost, however, for my tongue was growing slicker and slicker from practice, and when I did strike a liberal minded man, I found little trouble in persuading him to make an investment. Things ran slowly for a while; but finally business picked up, and I made things hum until three o'clock, when I returned to the boarding house, tired, and almost worn out.

"Have any luck?" asked the proprietor, as I entered the door.

"All kinds of it," I replied.

"Here's some more," he added, tossing me a small package which I immediately proceeded to open. Removing the first cover, I found a card with the inscription, "Compliments of the guests at the Columbia."

"Gee," thought I, I'll be a star boarder if these things keep on! But say! What can this bundle be?"

I picked the paper to pieces in my nervous and excited efforts to see what fortune had overtaken me, or rather, to learn what fate had befallen me.

Twenty dollars! For a moment I was under a spell of joy such as comes to a human not more than once or twice in a life time. I siezed the landlord's hand and shook it most heartily. He introduced me to all the boarders who had contributed toward the fund, at the same time assuring me that it was the sincere wish of all the donors that I re-

ceive the money not as a subscription to meet my needs, but as a gift for me to enjoy at the fair.

"Don't take any exceptions," said he. "We just wanted to give you *something*. Anyone who undertakes such a trip as yours deserves all the help he gets.

When I had somewhat recovered from my fit of joy I wondered how much money I had on hand altogether. Upon investigation when I returned to my room, I proudly produced sixty-nine dollars. Of this amount, twenty-five belonged to the book company, but there was plenty of pleasure in the forty-four that were left.

"I'll be off for Portland tonight," I whispered to myself, while I wrote to my employers at Chicago, of my day's business, and my sudden fortune in other lines.

I also wrote several other letters to Carrollton friends. I was feeling so fine over my marvelous luck that I was obliged to keep busy in order that I might not go crazy from joy.

When I had finished the letters I started to the post-office. I hunted a good while before I found it, but when I did make the discovery, I felt amply paid for my trouble, for I heard something that reminded me of old Carrollton. The New York Store, The Peoples' Store, The Arcade—all the business houses in town—are extremely popular with one fervent element in the junior circles of Carrollton's population. This is especially so when a lovesick boy or girl seeks to find

a place to enjoy a *tete-a-tete* with that "dear delumptious delicious somebody" who is the whole world to—nobody. And the public places of all towns share this fate. Courting at the postoffice is, I suppose, conducted in all towns the same as it is in Shoshone. I append a part of the long dialogue which occurred in the building where I mailed my letters. Did you ever hear one like it?

"I heard from you yesterday."

"You did?"

"Yes, I did."

"What did you hear?"

"Oh, I know."

"Do you?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then why don't you tell me?"

"I will some day."

"Tell me now."

"Not much I will."

"Why?"

"Oh, 'cause; you know."

"No, I don't."

"Aw!"

"Oh yes; is that the reason?"

"Yes, he told me not to."

"Who did?"

"Oh, you know."

"No, I don't."
"I do."
"Then why don't you tell me?"
"I will some day."
"When?"
"When you tell me."
"Now don't be silly; I want to know."
"So do I."
"Then, why don't you tell me?"
"I told you."
"No, you didn't."
"Yes, I did."
"Did you?"
"Didn't you just hear me?"
"Oh, yes; I forgot."
"You did?"
"Yes."
"Say! Please tell me!"
"What for?"
"Just 'cause I said so."
"Won't tomorrow do?"
"I don't know."
"Who does?"
"I don't know."
"Aw, cut that out!"
"What for?"

"'Cause I said so."
"Alright."
"Alrighty."
"Going to tell me?"
"Sure, I'll tell you."
"When?"
"When I get ready."
"Is that so?"
"Yes, that's so."
"How do you know?"
"'Cause I said so."
"How do I know?"
"I don't know."
"You're mean."
"Am I?"
"No, you're not; I was joking."
"No, you weren't."
"Yes I was, honey."
"Now don't get silly."
"Does that sound silly to you?"
"No, not to me."
"Then what's the 'dif?"
"Somebody might be listening."
"I wouldn't give a dime."
"I didn't think you'd swear."
"I'm not swearing."

"Yes, you are."
"I said I wouldn't give a d-i-m-e."
"I'm sorry; I need ten cents."
"What for?"
"Just 'cause I said so."
"You're getting silly."
"I don't give a dime."
"What do you give?"
"Something better."
"How many?"
"A whole lot."
"Oh, goody! When?"
"Some day."
"Not now?"
"No."
"Why?"
"'Cause I said so."
"I hope you won't forget."
"You know I won't."
"No, I don't."
"Don't you?"
"No."
"What makes you look so gone like?"
"You."
"What have I done?"
"Nothing."

"Then why do you blame me?"
"I'm not blaming you."
"You're not?"
"I wish I knew what you know."
"I don't know anything."
"That's one time you told the truth."
"What!"
"Yes, I said it."
"How dare you?"
"I don't know."
"I'm mad at you."
"Doggone the luck, anyway; I don't care."
"Now don't get gay."
"Am I gay?"
"I think you are."
"I am?"
"You're a mean old thing, anyhow."
"You don't say!"
"I do say!"
"Aw!"
"Shut up, will you?"
"No, will you?"
"You're horrid."
"Thanks! Goodbye!"
"Say, hold on a minute."
"What?"

"I didn't mean that."
"Yes, you did; I am heart broken."
"Poor boy; forgive me."
"Alright."
"Alrighty."
"Well, I must be going."
"What for?"
"Just 'cause I said so."
"Is that it?"
"Yes."
"Well, goodbye."
"Goodbye."
"Say there."
"What?"
"Goodbye."
"So long."

ON THE COAST

I arrived in Portland Monday afternoon. The city was overflowing with visitors from every nation on the globe. Russians, Germans, Greeks, Swedes, Spaniards, Turks—all Europe was there; but Europe was not the only country in Portland. China and Japan were out in full force, as well as were the sister states of South America. The whole world was having a regular, old fashioned family reunion.

I hunted from three o'clock till five before I found a place to stay all night. Every private house in town was taking care of forty or fifty more people than it could accommodate at any other time; and the hotels—they were simply crammed. The house where I put up was a little, one horse, suburban concern, but I was glad enough when I found it even though it was not much better than a pig pen.

The next morning I thought I would go out to the exposition grounds and see some of the sights, but when the sun was less than an hour high there was such a crowd on the road from the city to the grounds that I at once saw a great danger in trying to push myself through such a throng. And

as I did not think I could enjoy myself in the tremendous crowd, I made up my mind to entertain myself in the city proper; and after riding for an hour or more through different parts, I returned to the hotel and spent the remainder of the day in rest and quiet.

The next day was spent in like manner. But on Thursday I boarded a steamer on the Willamette and sailed for the beach via. Columbia river. The distance was about one hundred miles, and my ride on the water was a glorious one. The warm June sun poured amiable down upon us, and the waves of the swift current below us leaped and lashed joyously as we ploughed our way through the chanel of the beautiful river. I was on the lower deck where many of the passengers were sitting enjoying the warm sunshine; and I gradually worked my way into the minds of all the sightseers. First one would look at me then another, and finally they would make an exchange of smiles that meant no more to me than, "He's just a Missourian, that's all."

In due time I was called upon to answer all kinds of questions, especially those regarding my object in traveling alone. I had grown tired of answering queries that concerned no one but me, and my patience had been driven to wit's end; but common civility restrained me from impertinence and compelled me to make the best of the situation.

The captain emerged from the buffet room with a pitcher and a tumbler in his hands.

"Missouri?" said he.

"Yes sir," said I.

"Then drink to the health of Oregon."

He poured out a glassful of sweet lemonade remarking, "This is not whisky nor beer. Drink all you want. We shall soon be at the beach, and you may need something to stimulate your courage when we reach the mouth of the Columbia. The noise of the tide always frightens people who have come from the inland states. But fear nothing, my boy; we will see that nothing harms you."

I drank down the mild beverage with much relish, and the captain was off and at the helm of the vessel before I could collect my thoughts to thank him.

We had soon passed the foaming mouth of the Willamette, and were riding the waves of the famous Columbia. The air was growing misty; little birds flitted and twittered about the ship; the breeze from the west was growing stronger and stronger; and a strange odor scented the atmosphere; ah, we were nearing the great Pacific, and these were the signs that bade me know that the land's end was not far away.

I looked at my watch. We had been sailing down stream five hours, and were only thirty miles from the coast line. The captain returned, bringing with him a basket containing a collection of the choicest fruits of California.

"Young man," said he, "I have always had a profound sympathy for any one traveling alone; and I am especially

interested in a Missourian who has the grit to face the wild west under such disadvantages as confront you on your trip. I have brought you this basket of fruit that you may enjoy an apple or an orange while you wait for the vessel to reach the landing at Big Hook."

Like a flash, the nimble captain again disappeared, leaving the whole quantity of juicy meats to my mercy.

The hills along the banks of the river had fallen behind us, and we were sailing gracefully in a flatland stream, which, by degrees was growing broader and broader as we glided down toward the deep sea.

At last, those on deck began to stir and to open up their baggage, and I knew that our voyage was almost finished. A few minutes later we ran ashore at the foot of a small hill on the west bank, in a bend in the river.

When I ascended to the summit of the elevation, Balboa's wonder, in all it's grandeur and magnificence, lay before my unbelieving but conquered eyes.

A sight of the ocean always brings one to deep thought, and some are moved to tell of its beauties in elaborately decorated language, but this need not be expected of a Missourian; and I must not make any unnecessary display of my crude knowledge of English by trying to be graphic. To every writer of books there comes a climax of theme, and an inexperienced hand quite naturally yields to an opportunity to indulge in big words and high sounding terms. I confess that

from the moment the first stroke was made in this compilation, I have looked forward to this chapter as a place to relieve my soul of some of its "poetry." But as I approach the spot my spirit is dumb, and I shall not disturb the peace of my soul by any humble attempt toward grandiloquence.

Those whose good fortune it has been to look upon the sea will understand that, however hard I might try, I could never write a vivid description of such a grand, of such an awful ocean as the Pacific; and those whose eyes have yet to partake of the beauties of its scenery would gain nothing from my attempt at such. So I leave it to your way of thinking to have a good account of what I saw while I was on the beach.

COMING HOME

The next place I visited was Spokane, the queen city of Washington. It was here that the westerner's keen power to detect personal traits and "localisms" in strangers got in its best work. I could not venture outside a door without having it thrown up to me by some upstart of a fellow that I was from the Jesse James state. Nor could I converse blind to the realization that my hearers were laughing in their sleeves because I was a "conceited Missourian." Even when I would stroll unoffendingly along the crowded pavement, some by-stander would take on a look of wisdom, wonder whether I lived in Mexico or in Chillicothe, and leave me to defend myself as best I could by praising goodness that I was from Carrollton.

But such is the hard lot of any Missourian away from home, and one might as well try to outrun his shadow on a bright summer day as to attempt to hide his nationality or even conceal his personal traits of character when he is in the western states.

I spent several days in Spokane, roaming in all parts of the city and seeing many strange sights. On the Fourth of July I followed the crowd and went to Natatorium Park on the bank of the Spokane river, where a throng of more than twenty thousand people had gathered to celebrate. The day went off just as a Fourth at Carrollton, except on a grander scale. A child was slightly injured by the explosion of a torpedo during the afternoon; and two or three women fainted from the noise, and had to be taken to the hospital. At nightfall the celebration was ended with a splendid display of fireworks over the Spokane river.

From Tuesday till Friday I was busy in the suburbs, canvassing with my books. I began with the little town of Hillyard which is about seven miles by the car line from Howard and Riverside Junction in the center of the city proper. Hillyard is a mere village, but nearly every family patronized me, at the same time advising me that they did so only because I was a Missourian who did not know enough to make an honest living.

I finished my rounds at Hillyard. The next place that suffered my presence was Illinois avenue, a street in the most thickly settled part of the outskirts of the city. I earned a few dollars here, but my business was not attended with such success as it had been at Hillyard. Not only did I have a hard time finding anyone at home, but nearly every home supported a big bull dog, whose duty it was to lie on the lawn

and give the alarm when a book agent or a brass button peddler appeared at the front gate. I was not used to such things, and after getting two or three soaking snubs from as many persons, I returned to the Grand hotel on Howard street, paid off a big board bill, and left for Coeur D' Alene City, Idaho.

This was Friday. My object in going to Coeur D' Alene was twofold; first, to get the benefit of the scenery; second, to avail myself of the excellent advantages that it afforded canvassers. Being a health resort only thirty miles from Spokane, and connected with that place by trolley line, the little city was consequently full of people who had plenty of money. And as I had been aching to get into such a place for some time, I was more than glad to try my luck here.

Coeur D' Alene City is situated on a beautiful lake in the Coeur D' Alene mountains about fifty miles from the Canadian line. It is a town of about three thousand inhabitants, and probably owes its very existence to the surrounding scenery. The lake is not a wide one, but is thirty miles long, and walled in by steep mountains on all sides. The wealthy people of Spokane spend their summers rowing and fishing in this lake, and Coeur D' Alene could not well be anything but a prosperous and rapidly growing town.

Arriving here about noon, I took up my abode at the Bancroft hotel, where I spent many uneventful days. I say uneventful because I failed to do much business as a book

agent, not because I did not have a good time at other things. I certainly enjoyed everything that was to be seen and whenever it was possible for me to push myself into any new field of amusement, there it was that I was sure to be. I think I was on board all the boats that scoured the rock bottomed lake, for the captains treated me as if I were a young prince, and would let me ride on their respective vessels at my own sweet will. When I was not on deck a steamer I was out in a canoe paddling around looking at the fishes.

One evening at 8:30, while the sun was yet shining—in that latitude the July sun does not set until almost nine o'clock—I returned to the office room from an hour's splash in the water, and began to read the news. I had become deeply interested in an account of a great fire they had had in Spokane the very night I left that city, when my attention was called from the paper by my landlord's son who entered from the dining room with the following invitation for me:

"Mr. Williams, the Get There Eli Club meets in the parlor tonight, and we would be pleased to have you call."

I followed the young man into the room where the members of the particular order had assembled, but I could not bear to remain long. The young gents insisted on my joining them at a game of cards, but when they learned that I did not know how to play, the Missouri fun was on, and then for reasons best known to those who are acquainted with Idaho manners, I had to leave.

The next morning I sailed down lake Coeur D' Alene to the small village of Harrison, Idaho, where I boarded a train for Wallace. After spending a few days in this industrious town, I journeyed on to Missoula, Montana. From Missoula I went to Helena, and I might pause right here to say that Helena was the toughest place that I struck on the whole course of my trip, Cheyenne excepted. I stayed in Helena about a week, and then went to Livingston, where I branched off into Yellowstone Park.

Yellowstone scenery is by far the most beautiful and magnificent of all wonders in the west. I was in the park but a day, and did not visit many of the interesting spots; but I saw with my own eyes, the Old Faithful Geyser, which alone was worth the price of the trip. If I were a poet or even a master in prose, I would indeed have a happy theme; but as has already been discovered, I am nothing in the world but a "mutton headed idiot from Missouri, the home of the buzzards," and whoever heard of a buzzard writing poetry? Hence my well founded excuse for not tarrying in my story to tamper with a topic that would test the ability of a Milton, Bacon or Shakespeare. My conclusion shall be as abrupt as my beginning. My homeward flight was quick and devoid of interest until I arrived in Kansas City, where I met Mr. Hazel, of the Farm Tool Co., with whom I rode to Carrollton.

It has been truly said that "nobody wants to live at second hand. To read about great pictures, but never to see

them with our own eyes; to hear about the world's great marvels of scenery, but never to stand before them; to know through others' experience, that there are such things as love and glory and victory and happiness, but never to enter them for ourselves—what sort of life is that for any human being to live? A young man, a young woman wants to have all that is deepest and sweetest in life, and not just the hear or dream about it. Life at second hand is not life, but a shadow and a failure."

But if I may quote again, "it has been either my good or evil lot to have my roving passion gratified. I have wandered through different countries, and witnessed many of the shifting scenes of life. I cannot say that I have studied them with the eye of a philosopher, but rather with the sauntering gaze with which humble lovers of the picturesque stroll from the window of one print shop to another; caught sometimes by delineations of beauty, sometimes by distortion of caricature, and sometimes by the loveliness of landscape.

* * * *

"But human nature is made up of foibles and prejudices; and its best and tenderest affections are mingled with these factitious feelings. He who has sought renown about the world, and has reaped a full harvest of worldly favor, will find, after all, that there is no love, no admiration, no applause so sweet to the soul as that which springs up in his native place. It is there that he seeks to be gathered in peace

and honor among his kindred and his earlier friends. And when the weary heart and failing head begin to warn him that the evening of life is drawing on, he turns as fondly as does the infant to the mother's arms, to sink to sleep in the bosom of the scene of his childhood."

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

Book writing is a tremendous job. The elements of these chapters have been raked up at odd spells when no more profitable employment was at hand; sifted while my friends stood by superintending the work with a generous amount of advice, which only fell into the seive to be mixed and culled with the original matter; and cemented together at intervals of leisure and ease when I sat by a warm fireside calling up vague recollections of my summer's ride in the cold mountains, and jotting down, now and then, a few items as the spirit saw fit to move me toward this particular end.

Yet, since I finished the foregoing parts some days ago, it has been intimated by a presuming prophet that I am aspiring to the utmost heights in literature; that I am venturing out upon this journey to success with no realization that there is such a thing as failure. Such speculations are nothing in the world but nonsense, and deserve a loud laugh of mockery for I am making no attempt whatever toward pushing myself out of my own limitations. An effort of this kind, to say the least, would be foolish, and would conduce to an ultimate thwarting of my more modest and more rational undertakings.

Comment of this character never fails to set my brain wheels of philosophy in motion, but as I promised my best friend that I would not be longer than one day writing this book, I am restrained for want of time from making any usual demonstrations. Notwithstanding this fact, this book has been written for money, not for glory; and it might be a good thing to throw in a few plain, unpolished thoughts for good measure. As it has been gotten up for the amusement of my friends rather than for their instruction in the art of using slang, I have the egotistic impudence to predict that it is not going to stray far from its mark; but I really believe a bit of philosophy would insure me against a second outbreak of uncomplimentary accusations.

Ever since the day when the Athenian gods went about ministering to the wants of their fellow beings there have been men and women who like to mimic them on the stage. Likewise, from Socrates to Booker T. Washington, have all sages been worshipped and imitated by those who have sought and striven to stand before the world as philosophers. And so it will always be. Every time the earth bounds off into space, passes the state of perihelion, goes on, and finally regains its position of aphelion, the world loses a fool and gains an idiot who at once sets about to expound his supernatural views on philosophy between the covers of an ill written book!

From early childhood I have had an uncontrollable desire to be a philosopher. In my early days I would sometimes

terrify my parents by coaxing the neighbors' children into our front yard at home, where I would proceed to hold a school. My favorite doctrine was to play marbles for keeps and never give them back. As a result, I have arrived at man's estate as poor as Job's lousy gobbler, devoid of earthly means, and destitute of wing power. I cannot fly over the ditches of everlasting get-rich-quick schemes. What, then, is left but for me to philosophize this pile of prepared trash?

Moreover, there is no better place in the world to hide a bad thought than on the nice, clean page of a book that is to be put on sale in the author's home town. Some people never know a good thing when they see it; others are quick to absorb anything new provided it does not cost them any money or physical exertion. So there you are! How is any one to know what is best for him to do?

In face of the heart-crushing outlook, I have neither desire nor inclination to waste any more of my energy. The coal situation has reached a climax, and as I do not want this chapter to bear evidence of having been written with frozen ink, I have concluded to postpone the construction of my work on philosophy until next summer when I shall prepare it all afresh and use it as a supplement to an old manuscript which I intend to hunt up, remodel and publish as soon as the new has worn off of "A Missourian in the Far West, or the World as Seen by a Stranger."

I leave off as I began; the only dread I have is of the book borrower. And I have a promise to make; this book shall never be revised, and not a single copy shall ever be sold in that dense ten-miles-up-the-track mass of ignorance, Norborne.

"Man's a vapor
Full of woes,
Writes a book—
Up he goes."

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A MISSOURIAN IN THE FAR WEST

OR

The World as Seen by a Stranger

BY

JOEL STROTHER WILLIAMS

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